

## Putin, in Crimea for Annexation Anniversary, Launches Power Stations

SEVASTOPOL, Crimea - President Vladimir Putin inaugurated two new power stations in Crimea on Monday after flying into the Black Sea peninsula to celebrate the fifth anniversary of Russia's annexation of the region from Ukraine.

The power stations, in the cities of Sevastopol and Simferopol, were partially launched last year, but Monday's inauguration marked the moment they began working at full capacity. The same facilities were at the center of an international scandal after German engineering company Siemens said its power turbines had been installed at them without its knowledge and in violation of European Union sanctions. Russia denied that. Putin, who has poured billions



of Russian taxpayer dollars into Crimea since Moscow seized control of it in 2014, attended the launch of the Sevastopol power station and oversaw the launch of the Simferopol facility by video conference.

"Today another important step has been taken to strengthen the energy security of the Crimean Peninsula and of the whole south of the Russian Federation," said Putin. The two new power stations generated as

much electricity as Crimea used to get from Ukraine pre-annexation, he added, and could cover 90 percent of Crimea's power needs.

Ukraine says it wants Crimea back and most countries still recognize it as Ukrainian territory.

Russia says the matter is closed forever however, and that a 2014 referendum held after Russian forces secured the peninsula showed Crimeans want to be part of Russia. Putin is due to speak at a music concert later on Monday and to hold talks with local people about what Russia has achieved in Crimea in the last five years and where it has fallen short.

Russia has spent heavily to try ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

## Neighbor News

### China's Xi to Make 3-Nation Europe Visit Starting Thursday

BEIJING — Chinese President Xi Jinping will visit Italy, France and Monaco from Thursday to March 26, the foreign ministry said Monday.

Italy's coalition government has sent mixed signals over whether it will sign a proposed agreement to join China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road infrastructure investment drive. The initiative aims to expand commerce by building ports, railways and other infrastructure across more than

60 countries from the South Pacific through Asia to Europe and Africa.

Projects under the initiative have faced complaints that they leave host countries with too much debt, and with too little work going to local companies.

Italy's Undersecretary of State Guglielmo Picchi tweeted earlier this month that Italy should not sign the agreement. The foreign ministry's statement did not give details of Xi's schedule during the trip. (AP)

### Govt Making Efforts for Stabilizing Economy: PM's Advisor

KARACHI - Advisor to Prime Minister on Commerce Abdul Razzak Dawood Monday said the present government was making efforts to extend all out support to the business community for stabilizing the country's economy.

He stated this while addressing a seminar on Trade Opportunities in USA, China and Indonesia at a hotel here.

He appreciated the growth of rice industry in the country and said that rice exports surpassed US\$2 billion in financial year 2018 and it was very impressive that the rice industry was focused to achieve the exports target of \$5 billion.

He said that rice industry was at the top in the country and it has produced excellent results.

All traders and businessmen, especially, the rice industry, will be provided every possible support to help achieve their set targets, he added.

He suggested that the traders and businessmen of the country should also go overseas to build their networks all over the globe. We can also build multi-national networks like other nations, he added. He advised to the members of business community to devise long-term planing and avoid formulating short-term policy. He called upon the chambers and associations of commerce and industries to build groups to give their inputs with regard to Pakistan's Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with other countries. (Monitoring Desk)

### 'A Statement of Fact': Aussie Politician Refuses to Backtrack after Blaming Muslims for NZ Attack

CHRISTCHURCH - An Australian senator who implied that Muslims are to blame for the attacks on New Zealand mosques has stood by his remarks, accusing the government of hypocrisy. Over one million people have signed a petition for him to resign. Queensland Senator Fraser Anning has remained defiant in the face of an avalanche of criticism and calls for his resignation over his controversial remark on the Christchurch massacre. In a statement released

on the same day when 50 people were gunned down by white supremacist attacker Brenton Tarrant, Anning suggested that the tragedy highlighted "the growing fear over an increasing Muslim presence" in New Zealand. Although Anning condemned the massacre in his initial statement, it did not save him from incurring the wrath of most of the world, including Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and politicians of all affiliations. ...*(More on P4)...(19)*

BRUSSELS - NATO and the European Union are condemning Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula five years after Moscow declared the region Russian territory. NATO allies said in a statement Monday that "we strongly condemn this act, which we do not and will not recognize."

They also criticized Russia's military buildup in Crimea and alleged rights abuses including "arbitrary detentions, arrest, and torture" against members of the Crimean

## NATO, EU Condemn Russia's 2014 Seizure of Crimea

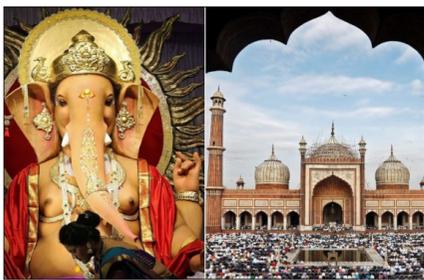


Tartar community. EU foreign ministers are marking the fifth anniversary of the annexation. EU foreign policy chief

Federica Mogherini said: "We stand in full solidarity with Ukraine, supporting its sovereignty and territorial integrity." NATO and the EU also

called for the release of Ukrainian sailors detained by the Russian navy and coast guard in waters off Ukraine in November. (Fox News)

## Interfaith Kidney Swap: Muslim, Hindu Families in India Form Close Bond after Exchanging Organs



NEW DELHI - A pair of Indian families waiting for kidney transplants may have found the secret to ending religious strife: interfaith organ sharing. The Hindu and

Muslim households are now close friends after swapping their innards. Nadeem and Nazreen Patel forged an unbreakable bond with Ramswarth Yadav and his

wife Satyadevi after a doctor proposed that the Muslim and Hindu families serve as kidney donors for each other.

Nadeem, a father of three children, was on dialysis for four years and was facing death unless a suitable kidney donor was found. Ramswarth was also suffering from kidney disease and hoped to undergo a transplant. A doctor at Mumbai's Saifee Hospital suggested a swap between the two families, since Ramswarth's blood group (A) matched that

of Mrs Patel, while Nadeem's (B) was a perfect fit for Mrs Yadav. After a month of consultations, a swap transplant was agreed upon. The surgery was a success, with the two households now treating each other as family. "In matters of life and death, religion doesn't matter," Ramswarth's son Sanjay told the Times of India. "Relatives extended financial help, but nobody was willing to give a kidney. We can never thank Nazreen enough." ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

## Indian Navy Deploys Aircraft Carrier & Nuclear Subs to Deter 'Misadventures' by Pakistan

NEW DELHI - Dozens of Indian warships, including an aircraft carrier and nuclear-powered submarines, left a massive maritime exercise and were deployed amid simmering tensions with Pakistan, the Navy has confirmed. INS 'Vikramaditya,' a Russian-built aircraft carrier, and a number of nuclear submarines have set sail along with other vessels and aircraft, according to a statement by the Indian military. The move is intended "to prevent, deter and defeat

any misadventure by Pakistan in the maritime domain."

Most of the warships were part of TROPEX 2019, India's largest war games involving the Navy, Air Force and Army. As tensions mounted between India and Pakistan, they were "swiftly transitioned from exercise to operational deployment mode," the military said.

The wordy statement doesn't say much about the time of the deployment, nor did it mention ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

## Tajikistan Intends to Enhance Trade Volume with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD - Tajikistani investors and business community will take advantage of package of incentives offered to foreign investors by Prime Minister Imran Khan and this would help both the countries to take bilateral trade to \$500 million per annum.

A 18-member high-level Tajikistan delegation of investors and businessmen led by Chairman Union of Private Sector Development of Tajikistan Radzhabov Fayzali Kurbonalievich called on Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Mian Kashif Ashfaq on Monday at PFC headquarter," says a press release issued here on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion leader of the delegation

said Tajikistan was keen to promote bilateral trade with Pakistan as both countries have huge potential to enhance trade, joint ventures and investment in different fields.

He said they were here in Pakistan to explore new vistas in investment sector besides giving new impetus to their ties through enhanced co-operation in diversified areas, including trade, energy, furniture, garments, cotton, connectivity, health, education and culture.

He urged that Pakistani business community should become more proactive to promote business relations with Tajik counterparts as both countries have great potential for mutual co-operation. (Agencies)

## Georgia, Tajikistan Sign Draft Agreement on International Road Transport

DUSHANBE - Georgia and Tajikistan signed a draft agreement on International Road Transport which will facilitate the growth of the passenger and freight traffic flow between Georgia and the Republic of Tajikistan and strengthen mutually beneficial economic cooperation.

Georgia's Ministry of Economy reports that the draft agreement determines the bilateral, transit or via-third-party-countries transportation based on quota permits, the number of which is determined by the parties on the basis of the agreement and the exchange of permit forms.

In addition, it regulates the legal issues related to road transportation between the parties,

which will help Georgian and Tajiki carriers in their business activities. The Draft Agreement on International Road Traffic between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and Government of Georgia was prepared and signed in Tbilisi last week, during the visit of the representatives of the Ministry of Transport of Tajikistan to Tbilisi.

At the meeting, the members of the Tajik and Georgian delegations agreed on the text of the Agreement and a relevant protocol was signed seeing the parties confirm mutual interest in promptly completing the necessary internal procedures to speed up signing of the Agreement. (Agencies)

## Boeing Crashes Cast Spotlight on US Aviation Regulator

NEW YORK - Was the United States complacent in its certification of the Boeing 737 MAX?

That's a question everyone is asking after Addis Ababa said flight recorded data showed "clear similarities" between last week's Ethiopian Airlines crash and that of Indonesia's Lion Air five months earlier.

In service since May 2017, the 737 MAX 8, one of several variants of the 737 MAX, has now experienced two deadly tragedies, a scenario that is unprecedented for a new aircraft.

The March 10 crash, south-east of the Ethiopian capital, claimed 157 lives, on top of the 189 who died when the Lion Air flight plunged ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

## France Seeks Answers after Police Failed to Stop Paris Riots

PARIS — French President Emmanuel Macron summoned top security officials Monday after police failed to contain resurgent rioting during yellow vest protests that transformed a luxurious Paris avenue into a battle scene.

The prime minister promised to announce new measures later Monday to avoid a repeat of Saturday's violence, in which rioters set life-threatening fires, ransacked luxury stores and attacked police around the Champs-Elysees.

The new surge in violence came as the 4-month-old yellow vest movement demanding economic justice has been dwindling. Images of the destruction — including from a bank fire that engulfed a residential building and threatened the lives ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

## UK Prime Minister in Last-Minute Push to Win Brexit Support

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May is making a last-minute push to win support for her European Union divorce deal, with attention focused on wooing Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party.

The DUP's 10 lawmakers are pivotal to May's effort to overturn two overwhelming defeats in Parliament, because their support could influence hard-line members of May's Conservative Party. Opposition has focused on the so-called backstop, de-



signed to ensure there is no hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. But May suffered a setback Monday when former Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson refused to support her deal.

Johnson used his column in the Daily Telegraph to say that further changes are needed to the backstop, claiming it left the U.K. vulnerable to "an indefinite means of blackmail" by Brussels. (Fox News)

## Shooting 'Appears to be Terrorist Attack', Utrecht Threat Level Now Highest - Counter-Terror Agency

UTRECHT - The Netherlands raised the terror threat in Utrecht province to highest following a tram shooting, which could have killed one and injured several others. The Dutch counter-terror agency said it appears to be a terror attack.

The National Anti-Terrorism Coordinator (NATC) said it raised the terrorism threat level to 5 in all of Utrecht area, the highest for the emergencies of this kind. The alert will be in place until at least 18:00 local time. The government authority said the

decision was made after the shooting on a tram in Utrecht, where rescue efforts and a manhunt for possible perpetrators are still underway. The incident "currently has all the characteristics of a terrorist attack," NATC said. Earlier in March, the agency warned that terrorism threat remains high all across the country. "Over the past year the threat situation in the Netherlands has been unsettled," it warned, saying, "the chance of an attack in the Netherlands is still real." ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

## Japan to Make Crater on Asteroid to Get Samples from Inside

TOKYO — Japan's space agency said Monday that its Hayabusa2 spacecraft will follow up last month's touchdown on a distant asteroid with another risky mission — to drop an explosive to make a crater and collect underground samples to get possible clues to the origin of the solar system. Hayabusa2 made history on Feb. 22 when it successfully touched down on the boulder-rich asteroid, where it also collected some surface fragments.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said Hayabusa2 is to drop a copper impactor the size of a baseball and weighing 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds) on the asteroid on April 5 to collect samples from deeper underground where they had not been exposed to the sun or space rays.

The new mission will require an immediate evacuation of the spacecraft to the other side of the asteroid so it won't get hit by flying shards from the blast, JAXA said. While moving away, Hayabusa2 will leave a camera to capture the outcome.

The mission will allow JAXA scientists to analyze details of a crater to find out the history of the asteroid, said Koji Wada, who is in charge of the project.

Hayabusa2 will start descending toward the asteroid the day before to carry out the mission from its home position of 20 kilometers (12 miles) above. It will drop a cone-shaped piece of equipment containing explosives that will blast off a copper plate on the bottom. ...*(More on P4)...(23)*